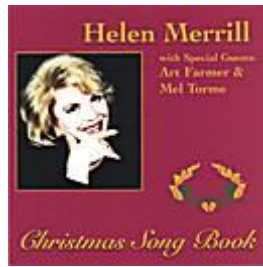


Mp3 Helen Merrill - Christmas Song Book



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A warm christmas jazz cd; Time magazine said, "the vocal event of the season-eloquent arrangements of Torrie Zito brings a freshness to the music." 14 MP3 Songs JAZZ: Smooth Jazz, JAZZ: Jazz Vocals

Details: Helen Merrill's long history in jazz began with her first album on the Mercury Emarcy label arranged and produced by Quincy Jones in 1954 up to her latest cd album released in early 2000. In between were more than 50 Jazz albums and countless concerts, club dates, festivals and other jazz activities. Ms. Merrill was born in New York City. She started her career at the 845 club in the Bronx while still in high school. The promoter at the club was noted for his ability to spot young future stars. Among these appearing with Helen at the time were Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie, Bud Powell, Oscar Pettiford, and numerous others. The name on the marquee was Helen Milcetic, her name which she later changed to Merrill. Ms. Merrill entered the world of music just as the big band era was ending and the much more challenging field of working with small groups had begun. During these formative years she worked with Earl Hines, Charles Mingus, Thad Jones, Clifford Brown, Gil Evans, Charlie Byrd, Marian McPartland, Al Haig, Jim Hall, Elvin Jones, Ron Carter, Bill Evans, Stan Getz, and literally hundreds of other musicians. Although she has made a large number of jazz albums and knows her way around recording studios in the United States, Japan and Europe, Ms. Merrill's recording career began rather undramatically in a non-commercial atmosphere in the now famous Rudy Van Gelder studio in New Jersey. She was accompanied by Jimmy Rainey, Don Elliot and Red Mitchell. The result was a single that eventually led to a contract with Mercury. Without much fanfare, Mercury released a jazz album titled simply "Helen Merrill." It was an instant success and has remained so to this day, more than 45 years later. The album, including one of the most acclaimed versions of the song, "What's new?" has been reissued and repackaged scores of times on various labels around the world. Readers of the Japanese magazine FM

radio voted the recording the best jazz album of the past 50 years. Mercury quickly signed Ms. Merrill to a new contract calling for four additional jazz albums. That first album featured Jimmy Jones, piano; Clifford Brown, trumpet; Milt Hinton, bass; Oscar Pettiford, cello and bass; Barry Galbraith, guitar; and others. The songs were "Whets New?" "Don't explain" "Born To Be Blue" "You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To" "Falling In Love With Love" "Lilac Wine" and "Spring Will Be A Little Late This Year" She recorded "Helen Merrill With Strings" for Mercury in 1955, "Dream Of You" in 1956, "Merrill At Midnight" in 1957 and "Nearness Of You" also in 1957. Helen Merrill lived for a number of years in Europe and recorded jazz albums in Italy, France and Norway and did frequent concerts. She made a number of trips to Japan for concerts and recorded for Japan Victor. She eventually moved to Tokyo in 1967. She returned to New York in 1972 where she now lives, making annual concert tours in Japan and Europe. Ms. Merrill recorded two Jazz albums in New York which have had exceptional success throughout the jazz world. They were "The Feeling is Mutual" and "A Shade of Difference" with arrangements by Dick Katz, featuring Thad Jones, fluegelhorn; Hubert Laws, flute; Jim Hall, guitar; Ron Carter and Richard Davis, bass; Elvin Jones, drums; Garry Bartz, saxophone. Ms. Merrill sings "A Lady Must Live" "My Funny Valentine" "Lonely Woman" "Where Do You Go?" and other jazz numbers Both Albums have recently been reissued in the cd format by Polygram on the Verve Label PolyGram also has reissued a boxed set of CD of the first Mercury albums under the title "The Complete Helen Merrill On Mercury" As a footnote to history, the late Leonard Feather, jazz historian and music critic for the Los Angeles Times, said in his book "The Book Of Jazz, From Then 'Till Now" (Dell), in discussing the gradual hiring of white musicians in black bands and hiring of blacks in previously all white orchestras, "...the stubbornest barrier of all. Involving implicit defiance of the mongrelization taboo against which southern politicians had inveighed in the race for white votes, fell in 1952 when Helen Merrill, unmistakably blonde, sang for three month's with Earl Hines Sextet..." In that same book, Feather wrote: "Srah Vaughans impact was a prelude to a succession of borderline pop-jazz vocalists. Nat King Cole, a jazz singer by any yardstick when he recorded with his own accompaniment in the early 1940s, was strictly a pop singer with faint tracers of jazz when he died in 1965. In a similar fringe zone are Frank Sinatra, Mel Torme, Barbra Streisand, and dozens others who have been mildly influenced by real jazz singers, There is a significant common denominator; these artists, though beyond reproach as performers, have little or no deep feeling for the blues. "A few have shown real jazz qualities; Peggy Lee and Helen Merrill, for example, both have warmth of timbre, an

acute sense of phrasing and a soulful quality that give their best work a beauty comparable with Billie Holiday. Ms. Merrill has recorded more than 40 albums.

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